

Quarterly
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No. 1

THE ECHANIZ PRESS
AMERICA'S FIRST PRINTING PRESS?
By Thomas W. McDonald

JOURNAL OF A JOURNEYING PRINTER
By Adrian Wilson

SERENDIPITY
NOTES ON PUBLICATIONS :: EXHIBITIONS
ELECTED TO MEMBERSHIP
&c. &c.

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The Book Club of California

FOUNDED in 1912, The Book Club of California is a non-profit association of book-lovers and collectors who have a special interest in Pacific Coast history, literature, and fine printing. Its chief aims are to further the interests of book collectors in the West and to promote an understanding and appreciation of fine books.

The Club is limited to eight hundred members. When vacancies exist membership is open to all who are in sympathy with its aims and whose applications are approved by the Board of Directors. Regular Membership involves no responsibilities beyond payment of the annual dues of \$15.00.* Dues date from the month of the member's election.

Members receive the *Quarterly News-Letter* and all parts of the current Keepsake series, *California Sheet Music Covers*. They have the privilege, but not the obligation, of buying the Club publications which are limited, as a rule, to one copy per member.

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The Echániz Press:

America's First Printing Press?

by Thomas W. McDonald*

THE printing buff knows that the inventions of the punch, the matrix, the alloy, and the flexible mold were basic to the invention of typographic printing. Nevertheless it is the printing press, and especially the handpress, which has become the symbol of the craft.

It is little wonder, then, that every tourist in Mexico who has the slightest interest in the graphic arts will, if he is so fortunate as to be in the know, eventually call at Mar Arafura, 8, in Mexico City. For this is the home of Don Guillermo Manuel Echániz Ruvalcaba and his charming wife, Doña Juliet Latremouille de Echániz; and there Mr. Echániz displays what many believe is the press on which were pulled America's first typographic impressions.

* Mr. McDonald is proof-reader at the Ward Ritchie Press, Los Angeles.

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Although the history of this nearly-eight-foot-tall wooden machine is known for a certainty only since 1929 when Mr. Echániz discovered it in the basement-warehouse of a Mexico City junk dealer, its antiquity, in terms of typographic printing, cannot be questioned. It is old, possibly (even probably) the oldest printing press in existence. But was it America's first press?

This intriguing question may never be answered to the satisfaction of everyone; but a study of the history of early American printing and of the internal evidence offered by the machine itself provides a persuasive inference.

There is documentary evidence that, probably in 1539 and certainly no later than 1540, one Juan Pablos migrated from Seville to New Spain and there, in the capital city of Mexico, set up a printing office. Because I believe that the Echániz press was brought by Pablos from Seville, my claim for the machine's priority rests in part upon my conviction (which I am willing to defend at another time) that Juan Pablos was America's first printer.

It was in 1539 that Juan Cromberger, of the famous Cromberger printing dynasty of Seville, assured of a ten-year printing monopoly in the New World, undertook to establish a branch of the House of Cromberger in the viceroyalty of New Spain. On 12 June of that year, in Seville, Cromberger negotiated three contracts: two with Juan Pablos, compositor of molded types, and one with Gil Barbero, puller [of presses].

By the terms of the first contract, Pablos agreed to go, together with his wife, Jerónima Gutiérrez, with a negro slave printer's devil identified only as Pedro, and with Gil Barbero, to Mexico City of New Spain of the Indies of the Ocean Sea. There he was to set up a printing office, to act as manager of that office, to hire help as needed, and to work himself, printing under the imprint of the House of Cromberger.

The text of the second Cromberger-Pablos contract noted that a printing press, paper, ink, and other equipment pertaining to printing were then being stowed aboard a ship. By signing the contract Pablos stipulated that he and other members of his party were prepared to sail from Seville for the New World on that same ship and at a moment's notice.

The Cromberger-Barbero contract obligated Barbero to work

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in the House of Cromberger in Mexico City for a period of three years. (The text of this contract reveals that Barbero was illiterate, a revelation that modern compositors will affect to find not surprising in a pressman.)

On 12 June 1539, then, Pablos and his party were ready to leave for the Indies on a ship which was even then being loaded with, among other items, one printing press. It seems safe to assume that the ship did sail shortly thereafter and that the Pablos party reached Mexico City within a few months.

That Pablos and Jerónima did reach Mexico City is evidenced by numerous references to them in New Spain documents of later years. That Pablos did have a printing office in operation well before 13 December 1540 also is certain because there exist (or did exist some years ago; I have been unable to determine their present whereabouts) two leaves, one fortunately including the dated colophon, of a book printed at the House of Cromberger in Mexico City.

(One of the editors of *Cartas de Indias* [Madrid, 1877] stated, although he offered no proof, that a twelve-leaf quarto was published in Mexico City by the House of Cromberger in 1539. This claim has been parroted and paraphrased again and again, and yet again, until it has achieved the status of historical fact and must, therefore, be given passing mention. That a slender volume such as that described was printed by Pablos before the end of 1539 is possible. The question of the trustworthiness of the report is too involved and not sufficiently relevant to be treated exhaustively here.)

We know that Pablos was printing in Mexico City in 1540 with equipment which he had brought from Spain. The equipment included a press. Was this the press now owned by Mr. Echániz?

During the 1530's, if not during the first decade after the Conquest, there was considerable agitation by influential persons, civil, and especially ecclesiastical, for the establishment of a printing office in Mexico City. The wonder is not that printing was begun so early (one hundred years before the first printing in British North America) but rather that it came so late.

The explanation may be that Cromberger, who had the inside track with persons in high places, privately had no great en-

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thusiasm for the venture. His father Jácome had got his fingers into the New World pie early in the 20's. Why should Cromberger expend capital for a colonial printing office when he could use that capital to greater advantage exploiting the extensive New Spain interests held by his family, especially when he was already licensed to export books to New Spain at a 100% markup over Spanish prices?

My guess is that Antonio de Mendoza, first viceroy of New Spain, eager to promote technical progress but facing a multitude of problems when he first took office in Mexico City in 1535, finally got around to causing the Supreme Council of the Indies, headquartered in Seville, to threaten Cromberger with New World competition if he did not himself begin printing operations in Mexico City.

In that case Cromberger could well have decided to establish only a token office, furnished with equipment which he was ready to discard from his Seville office but which was adequate to qualify for the ten-year monopoly. Certainly the workmanship of the early books produced by Pablos argues the use of poor equipment. And if Cromberger did unload his poorest equipment on Pablos the case for the priority of the Echániz press is vastly strengthened; for the truth is that it is not much of a *printing* press —and never was. In northern Europe, and surely in Spain too, this press would have been an anachronism in 1539.

The Echániz press does not, in fact, appear to have been designed as a printing press but rather seems to have been a bookbinder's standing press crudely adapted for printing purposes. One could reasonably believe that Gutenberg, preoccupied a century earlier with the complex problems of developing movable types, might have employed just such a machine, obtained second-hand from a bookbinder and partially rebuilt for the purpose of pulling impressions from experimental types.

As it stands today the Echániz press could be made to serve with reasonable efficiency as a standing press simply by pulling out and removing the coffin or carriage. Nevertheless, this *is* a printing press. The "bed" or base, supported by cross-members which roughly correspond to the "winter" of more "modern" presses, is not found in this form on the orthodox standing press; its otherwise meaningless extension in front could have been de-

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signed only to support the coffin when the latter was pulled out (not "run out," for there is no rounce) clear of the platen or impression plate.

The absence of a "rounce," the usual handle-axle-cylinder-straps device with which the coffin and its type form are cranked in and out from under the platen, is another indication of the primitive character of this machine. (An early [1548] illustration of a handpress shows a rounce-handle; the device probably was developed long before the end of the fifteenth century.) With the Echániz press the pressmen pushed and pulled the coffin in and out by main strength and awkwardness.

Further proof that this machine was not originally designed for printing is the extreme length of the threaded wooden spindle, more than thirty inches. This permits the platen to be raised to clear the coffin by more than two feet, whereas in a proper printing press a one-inch clearance is more than ample.

These anachronistic features of the press argue its use by a printer who worked under very primitive conditions, as did Juan Pablos. But there is additional circumstantial evidence to indicate its possession by Pablos.

Pablos issued books under the House of Cromberger imprint from 1539 or 1540 until 1544, although Juan Cromberger died in 1540. From 1545 to 1547, possibly while he was negotiating for the purchase of the office, Pablos printed anonymously. By January 1548 he had obtained title; the colophon of a book of that date reads, ". . . printed in the very loyal city of mexico in [the] house of juan pablos . . ."

It seems unlikely that Pablos could have obtained new equipment from the Cromberger heirs while he was negotiating for the purchase of the business. They seem to have taken little interest in the Mexico City office. It is equally unlikely that Pablos would have invested funds of his own in new equipment until he had obtained title to the office *and* to the monopoly which the house enjoyed.

Pablos *could* have printed only on the Echániz press during those first eight or nine years for the machine meets the specifications demanded by Pablos' early work. The dimensions of the platen are approximately 17 by 25 inches; the more critical inside dimensions of the wooden chase, which fits perfectly on the

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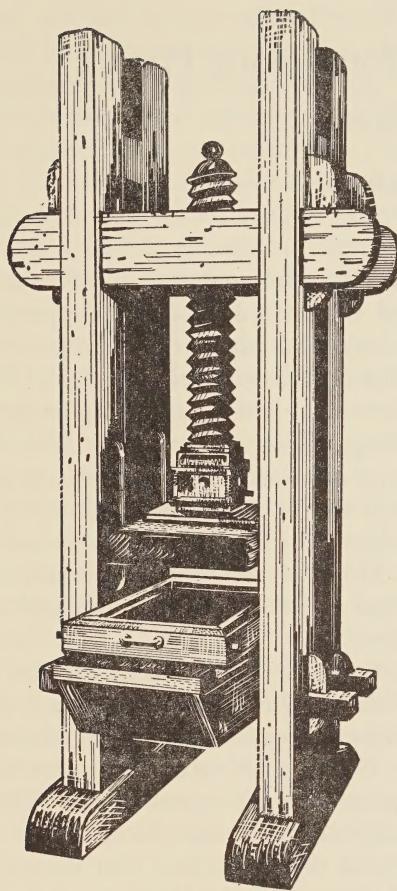
wooden "press-stone" of the coffin, are fractionally more than 13 by 21 inches. This is more than ample to accommodate a four-page form of the largest-size quartos which Pablos printed.

But Pablos did obtain a second printing press some time before his death in 1560, a press on which he produced work superior to his early efforts. In a document dated 1563, two printing presses are enumerated when Pablos' widow leased the whole of the printing office equipment to Pedro Ocharte, her son-in-law who became America's third printer. (Earlier, Antonio de Espinosa, a former employee of Pablos, had succeeded in breaking the Pablos monopoly and had set up his own printing house.)

I am convinced that one of the two printing presses leased and later purchased by Ocharte from Jerónima Gutiérrez was the Echániz press because in two places this machine bears the fire-mark, "Impressor [Printer] Pedro Ochar." It is quite clear that this was Ocharte's press; it is reasonable to assume that it came from the Pablos office because Ocharte at that late date hardly would have caused so primitive a machine to be built or adapted to printing purposes—especially since he undoubtedly was familiar with the equipment with which Espinosa produced fine presswork.

Is the Echániz press America's first printing press? For me, the answer is *Yes!* I believe, or like to believe, that I have had the privilege of disassembling (and of examining and measuring and recording in detailed sketches every small part of) the printing press with which Juan Pablos sailed down the Guadalquivir (then, the Betis) River in 1539. I like to believe this—but how I wish I knew!

[See note on illustration on next page.]



This drawing of the Echániz press by Robert A. Weinstein shows its standing-press character. The platen clears the coffin by several inches; it can be run up to accommodate a tall stack of bound books. The coffin, surmounted by the wooden chase but devoid of a type form, is midway between its pushed-in position, where two wedge-pin stops (not visible) assure its being centered below the platen, and its pulled out position where the type form would be inked and the sheet laid on. Tympan and frisket frames, which have not survived, were hinged on small pins protruding from either side of the coffin.

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Journal of a Journeying Printer

by Adrian Wilson

Part Four: Conclusion

Many of the special publications of the Cambridge University Press are designed by John Dreyfus, its typographical adviser. On the walls of his office hang the following: two roman alphabets cut in stone by David McFall, a large Swiss poster from an exhibition of Etruscan tomb paintings, early French engravings of typefounding, a late 18th century playbill for *King Lear* at Covent Garden, and a cast of a slate which proclaims: "Gravestones cut in any of the hands by John Baskerville (sic), Writing Master." If the classical allusions and intimations of mortality seem formidable, Dreyfus' charming debonair manner soon informs the visitor that it is the life, the theatricality, in these things which interests him.

Dreyfus is also Typographical Adviser to the Monotype Corporation, a position in which he deals with type designers and copyrights, and organizes exhibitions such as the recent magnificent one on Eric Gill. In any day the main currents of international typography cross his several desks. Dreyfus is also the author of the comprehensive exposition of the work of the late Dutch type and book designer, Jan Van Krimpen, an exquisite volume produced at the Enschedé plant under Van Krimpen's supervision. A paper which Dreyfus delivered for the Double Crown Club of London on *Bruce Rogers and American Typography* will be issued this year in celebration of the Tenth Anniversary of the American Branch of the Cambridge University Press.

Working closely with Dreyfus in the design and production of Cambridge imprints is John Peters, a former RAF flyer who still carries its badge, a luxuriant mustache, and whose architectural training has given him an uncanny technique with a ruling pen and brush. He has employed it to design a handsome open letter, Castellar, cut by Monotype, as well as a tiny, yet

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amazingly legible Bible type, Petrus, and a poster type for British Transport, not yet in use. With Peter Foster he operates the Vine Press, a private venture, in the charming thatched village of Hemingford Grey near Cambridge.

When *The Times* published photographs last winter of the road signs for England's first superhighway, a ten-mile bypass, Brook Crutchley was the first to write a letter to the Editor. He protested the absurdity of making signs thirty feet high, half again the height of a London double-decker bus, simply to accommodate the ascenders and descenders of lower case sanserif letters, when a capital alphabet with serifs could be designed which was just as legible and required a sign of half the height. In private he told me that such an alphabet had already been designed by David Kindersley, a letter cutter in stone and former colleague of Eric Gill, who has his workshop in Barton, nearby.

I was particularly eager to find any living evidence of Gill's influence, and I soon searched out Kindersley's thatched-roof barn. A vast piece of canvas formed an inside wall which was hoisted, like a portcullis, at my approach. Great slabs of stone were propped around the chalky room like fugitives from Stonehenge, and chipping at them with chisels and round-ended hammers were four men in their early twenties, one bearded. He introduced himself as Kevin Cribb and said he had grown up at Gill and Hague's Press at Piggotts, where his father cut stone. The presses had been sold, he said, and there was nothing left to see there except the tourists who still came on pilgrimages. David Kindersley emerged from an inner office, fully as colorful a figure as Gill must have been, with a fine pointed beard, a great bald head and a mellifluous voice. His presence, and the eager attention of his workers immediately created an atmosphere in which one discussed not techniques, nor money-making, nor the plight of the craftsman, but the philosophy of the work.

Stonecutting as Kindersley practices it is a painstaking art. Even a small letter takes many minutes to incise, allowing good time for reflection upon its structure. Still, it is the drive, the vitality, the freedom in the cutting that is the object. For this reason, Kindersley believes in drawing his letters directly on the stone, by eye and without mechanical aids, following a small sketch he has presented to the customer for approval. The

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lugubrious ends of most of Kindersley's commissions, tombstones, war memorials, the chapel of the American Cemetery at Cambridge, has little effect on the *joie de vivre* of the Workshop. The apprentices spiritedly cut the mouldings or shape the stones, make tea or repair to the nearby pub for bitter beer and to work out their predictions for the weekly football pool. The Workshop also produces lettering for film titles such as the Michael Balcon productions and the Shell documentaries; book jackets for the Cambridge University Press, one actually cut in stone and photographed; a roman alphabet which is used in many counties for town and street signs; and exquisite alabaster bowls.

If one poles one's punt down the River Cam, along the Backs, past Magdalene College and the Pepys Library, one soon arrives at the lawn of Audley Cottage, the home of Will Carter, his vigorous family, and the Rampant Lions Press. Here, for the past decade, Carter has done job printing so uncommonly well that his style has permeated the whole industry. In addition he has cut signs and inscriptions in stone and wood and designed types. A documentary record of his remarkable experience was published in a handsome book by Carter this year. Currently he is collaborating with David Kindersley on a new face for Monotype. They have agreed on the roman and a trial size has been cut, but each is designing his own italic, Carter being partial to a calligraphic cursive and Kindersley preferring a sloped roman of the kind he cuts in stone. I regret I shall not be on hand for the arbitration conferences, for both these bearded craftsmen are brilliantly articulate and unfailingly candid.

The four corners of the English typographical world seem to be held down by Carters. In addition to Will, of the Rampant Lions Press, there is John Carter, his brother, the bibliographical expert of Sotheby's Auction Rooms where, last winter, a twelfth century German Gospels fetched \$109,000; there is Harry Carter, not related, of the Oxford University Press, the prime authority on early types and typefounding; and there is his son Matthew who is setting up as an independent type punch cutter near London.

But the British are not content just to design, cut, and print with type, they must write about it too. The extraordinary wealth and variety of publications on the subject include *Typographica*,

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Book Design and Production and the handbound periodical *Motif*, edited by Ruari McLean, the author of *Modern Book Design*. Herbert Spencer, the editor of *Typographica* is a young industrial designer with his stethoscope on the new, the forward-looking and the unusual in European printing design. A recent issue presented G. W. Ovink's delightful study of the design and production of the Dutch chocolate letters; another issue included an illustrated bibliography of the uninhibited Gabberbocchus Press, London's most spirited publishing house. The quarterly *Book Design and Production*, edited by the dynamic James Moran, acts as a powerful leaven for tired English book design. "Journal of a Journeying Printer" is scheduled to appear in its pages, quixotically illustrated with advertising cuts from an 1860 typefounder's catalogue.

To provide the stately British book with proper raw material there are still four commercial handmade paper mills in operation. Since I had provided it with such staunch support through past purchases, I paid a visit to the mill of J. Barcham Green at Maidstone in Kent. The mill is snuggled in a misty valley by a pond which provides the sparkling fresh water needed for fine paper. The village of Tovil, nearby, gave its name to one of my favorite sheets, a rugged "laid" with a wildly abandoned deckle, "hell to print on, but heaven to touch." I found it here disguised by the name "Linton," for in England the name of a "sordid little mill town like Tovil," I was told, "would spoil the sale of the paper." Rags are no longer used in the pulp which is now made entirely of new cotton linters, and in fact, the mill is now supported primarily by its production of filter papers for chemical use. I learned that, beautiful as they are, there is no such thing as a perfect sheet of handmade paper and each sheet is inspected before and after sizing and graded into one of three qualities, for sale at widely varying prices. Probably I should not have mentioned Dard Hunter, author of *Papermaking in The Americas*. It seems that he lured away two of Green's best men to make paper in America for the book!

One of the major jobs "in hand" at the Cambridge University Press is the new Authorized Version of the Bible, a translation into modern English, if not into modern typography. Cambridge will print the "limited" edition and Oxford will print the "trade"

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edition. Each press is supplying its own design and exchanging sample pages for criticism. The Cambridge version, I learned, will have the benefit of the scrutiny not only of the Syndics but of Mr. Stanley Morison himself.

My meetings with this titan of typographical scholarship were memorable. Not only was Morison delighted to view my *Printing for Theater* and my current projects but insisted on viewing them to the accompaniment of champagne at his Fleet Street pub. He has just finished a brilliant introduction for a corpus of analyses of sixteenth and seventeenth century type specimens, edited by John Dreyfus, in themselves milestones of scholarly thoroughness. At seventy, Morison holds a position unrivalled in English typography, but his influence extends even farther. For many years, I found, he was editor of *The Times Literary Supplement* and in fact, determined the paper's editorial policy. It was a privilege, therefore, to have converse not only with the patriarch of British typography but with the voice of England itself.

My acquaintance with Beatrice Warde, the voluble protagonist of the Monotype Corporation, was equally provocative. Being an American, she exercises precious little British restraint about her enthusiasms or her convictions. She is her *Crystal Goblet* of typography come to life with the sparkling wine still intact. I did my best to convince her to return to America and educate us further in matters of transparency, effervescence and good type.

Having described these colorful personages there is little left to tell about England except perhaps the *soirées* of its prolific societies—the William Morris Society, the Shaw Society, the Italic Handwriting Society, the Society for Theatre Research, the Monumental Brass Society and the Society for Preservation of Ancient Buildings. But that would leave jolly little space for the London Clubs and theatres, the libraries, the book stores, the publishers and pubs, the Penguins and Puffins, and the British Museum. And so, at the risk of offending, I close my journal with a safe six thousand miles between us. Meanwhile the contest for supremacy continues between the writers and the printers, the poets and the calligraphers, the monument cutters and whoever supplies the copy. The writers had best watch out lest they be supplanted by their proliferators. Even as I write a

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strike paralyzes the English printing industry. The printers refuse to print what the poets have written unless they receive more pounds, shillings and pence. The poets may have to write less or stop altogether. I leave them to decide: for letter or verse!

Exhibition Notes

BEGINNING IN OCTOBER and continuing through December 4, the Club had the pleasure of showing the graphic work of Jo Sinel (one of America's foremost industrial designers) in the role of a designer-printer, type designer and lettering man. This is a form of art little remembered of this pioneer of design for industry, but one in which he contributed some of his finest work in his forty-nine years as a creative artist. The initial letters that he made for the Grabhorn Press in the Twenties are among the finest that the press has used. His magazine design, his lettering—particularly the lettering he made for the Oxford Paper Company—, his exquisite, handmade dummy for his edited book on American trademarks, show this artist-craftsman at his very best. We believe that this has been one of the best shows the Club has had since the beginning of these shows some ten years ago.

(Coincidental with this exhibition, Mr. Sinel was honored with a comprehensive show of his industrial design at the California School of Arts and Crafts in Oakland, November 2 to 22.)

Beginning December 4, the exhibition space in the club rooms will be devoted to the Christmas book, *Keepsakes* and books still unsold, for Christmas giving.

The first exhibition of the New Year will open January 11, when the Club will be host to the Allen Press (Dorothy and Lew Allen, who are celebrating their first twenty years as fine printers-publishers). All of the books of this press since 1939 will be on show.

Notes on Publications

MARK TWAIN'S *Concerning Cats*, the Club's most recent publication, has been received most enthusiastically. A Twain original, designed by the Colt Press and printed by the Grabhorns, it thoroughly deserves the reception it is getting from the members. Over 400 of the 450 copies printed were subscribed for within two weeks of issue. Though unlikely, it is just possible that by the time this number of the *Quarterly* reaches you a few copies may still be available for Christmas presents.

The Club's Christmas book this year, a superb book on Japanese prints (the title has not yet been decided) about which a special letter appeared in the last issue of the *Quarterly*, appears to be about to break all records for a Club publication. As of this writing, without benefit of an official announcement (you will have received one by the time you read this) over 300 of the 400 copies

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printed have been reserved. Many requests have come in for second, and even third copies. It is most improbable that members will receive more than one. Should any copies remain when all single orders have been filled, a drawing will be held to decide which fortunate members will be rewarded with a second.

The spring book for 1960 will be *A Year of American Travel* by Jessie Benton Fremont. Published in 1878, the volume has become very hard to find in its original edition. It well deserves reprinting. Proofs of this new edition have just been received at the Club, and your Publications Committee is much impressed by its appearance. The book is being printed by Saul and Lillian Marks of the Plantin Press in Los Angeles.

Mrs. Fremont spent much of her year's travel in California, and in the book she relives times spent there with her famous husband in the early days. To enhance her text the Plantin Press has commissioned Ernest Freed, noted artist, to engrave plates for the book. These illustrations, engraved on copper (a rather unusual medium these days) are a delight. To explain his method we quote from a letter from the printer: "Mr. Freed has based his engravings on the late fifteenth century practise of the 'dotted print,' (or manière criblée) essentially white line engravings in relief, supplemented by ornaments, such as circles, stars, dots, etc., etc., stamped upon the plate's black background. For a more contemporary feeling Mr. Freed has employed the burin and the punch instead of the ornamental pattern."

The edition of *A Year of American Travel* will be limited to 450 copies, and is priced at \$12.50. Members can be assured of both an interesting and beautiful book.

Stanley Morison's *Typographic Design in Relation to Photographic Composition*, the Club's spring 1959 publication, was recently reviewed in *The Times Literary Supplement*. A few copies of this book by England's most distinguished typographer still remain. It should make an ideal Christmas gift for members to give to their friends.

Elected to Membership

The following have been elected to membership since the Fall issue of the News Letter:

<i>Member</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Sponsor</i>
Miss Elizabeth N. Bell	San Francisco	Albert Sperisen
Irving Eidenberg	San Francisco	Mrs. R. F. Ferguson
Michael Grieg	San Francisco	Adrian Wilson
Mr. & Mrs. John W. Gunter	San Mateo	Harold C. Holmes
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Robert Laxalt	Reno, Nevada	Sherrill Halbert
Michel Massey	Berkeley	David Magee
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David A. Silver	Atherton	Oscar Lewis
King Co. Public Library	Seattle, Washington	Michael Harrison
San Fernando Valley State College	Northridge	Carl S. Dentzel
University of Wyoming	Laramie, Wyoming	Oscar Lewis

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Keepsakes

OUR 1960 KEEPSAKE SERIES is well under way and promises to be one of the most popular in the Club's history—the title: *Early California Mailbag*—the editors: Mr. Edgar Jessup, Mr. Henry H. Clifford and Mr. M. C. Nathan. Philatelists as well as bibliophiles will certainly look forward to the notes about and reproductions of the rare postal covers, most of which are selected treasures from the renowned collections of the editors.

There will probably be two mailings of six keepsakes each, the first of which you may expect in March.

Roger Levenson will execute the 1960 Keepsakes at his Tamalpais Press in Berkeley.

Serendipity

A RECENT VISITOR at the Club was Dr. Hans A. Halbey, director of the Klingspor Museum of international book arts in Offenbach-on-Main, Germany. Dr. Halbey was accompanying an exhibition of modern German book design shown early in November at the University of California Library. Other distinguished visitors from overseas included H. C. Brideson, principal librarian of the Public Library of South Australia; Mr. W. R. Fletcher, a London bookseller, and Mrs. Fletcher; and Mr. J. R. Willison of the British Museum's department of printed books.

CLUB MEMBER Merle Armitage has recently established the Manzanita Press at Yucca Valley, California, to handle books that are of an exclusively western nature. The first publication of the new press, scheduled for January, 1960, is a biography of William Paul Whitsett, builder of the city of Van Nuys and the Colorado River Aqueduct. According to Mr. Armitage, Whitsett's boyhood reads "like a Mark Twain story."

IN SEPTEMBER, Carl I. Wheat received the first Henry R. Wagner Memorial Award of the California Historical Society for outstanding achievement in historical scholarship. The award was made in recognition of the first two volumes of Mr. Wheat's distinguished work, *The Mapping of the Trans-Mississippi West 1540-1861*, which, when complete, will run to five large folio volumes. Mr. Wheat also received recognition for his work, in June, when an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters was conferred on him by Pomona College where he was graduated *cum laude* in 1915 and where, among many other duties, he has served as a trustee.

AN EDITORIAL in a recent edition of Alfred A. Knopf's *Borzoi Quarterly* asks why so many books now published are so badly written and observes that editorial standards are becoming lower each year. The trouble, the editorial continues,

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begins in schools and colleges where "very few people, indeed, are learning how to handle the English language." It concludes with a query: "Will a sort of Gresham's law operate one of these days and the bad writing drive out the good?"

THE CLUB has recently received for its ephemeral collection a folder, "With 25 Soldiers of Lead I have Conquered the World," printed by James D. Hart on "the Albion press known as Black Mack" and written by Francis Meynell for the type specimen book of the Pelican Press. A portfolio of material from the Moxon Chappel includes specimen printing from the following: The Blake, Halcyon, Hilltop Hobbies, Meridian, Osborne and The Pfutser & Tinker Presses.

THE HUNTINGTON LIBRARY continues their remarkable publishing program: scholarly texts of wide appeal, excellently printed, and reasonably priced. For example, we have at hand *An American In Maximilian's Mexico, 1865-66*, which comprises the diaries of William Marshall Anderson. The book is edited by Ramón Eduardo Ruiz and designed by Ward Ritchie. (\$4.25.) Also from the Huntington comes *L. J. Rose of Sunny Slope, 1827-99*, by L. J. Rose, Jr. Rose senior was one of a galaxy of builders of early southern California: his monument of success was the 2000-acre Sunny Slope ranch, a show place of vast orchards, vineyards and champion trotting horses. From Iowa, he headed west in 1855, battled the Indians, bought a hotel in Santa Fe, and finally arrived in California in 1860. Here he purchased 1,300 acres, today the site of Pasadena, the Huntington Library, and thousands of palatial suburban homes. The book was printed by Grant Dahlstrom. (\$5.00.)

A FEW TRADE BOOKS come our way with a happy blend of unusual text and illustrations which have been subtly joined by a gifted designer. Such is *This Sculptured Earth: The Landscape of America* written and illustrated by John A. Shimer. The publisher, Columbia University Press, wisely engaged the talents of Dorothy Abbe, free-lance designer. Miss Abbe, at one time associated with W. A. Dwiggins at the Puterschein-Hingham Press, has put together a book which nicely reflects the fascinating text and photographs. (Price \$7.50.)

THERE ARE ONLY two or three presses in America which regularly produce handmade books using handset types and handmade paper printed damp on a handpress. Among these is The Allen Press of Kentfield, California, which has just completed a de luxe folio edition of Joseph Conrad's *Youth*. This elegant book, measuring 16 by 11 inches, combines the virtues of a superlative text, skilled hand-craftsmanship, and the finest of materials. This edition of 140 copies, is the first in a series of handmade folios to be issued by Lewis & Dorothy Allen following their two years of typographic study and printing in France. The eight illustrations by the noted English artist Blair Hughes-Stanton are especially beautiful and colorful; each required nine inkings. The book is bound

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in full Chatham parchment, handmade in England, with decorations in three colors, and it is enclosed in a handsome slipcase. (\$35.00.)

JACK STAUFFACHER is planning to publish a memorial edition to his brother Frank A. Stauffacher (1914-1955). For this purpose, he wishes to receive "any fragments of letters, commentary, greetings . . . and other expressions that would lend themselves to such a tribute." This material may be sent to Mr. Stauffacher at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, Pittsburgh 13, Pennsylvania; or to Tom Scott, 305 Grant Avenue, San Francisco 8.

Letters of the Pike's Peak Gold Rush, by Libeus Barney, has just been published by The Talisman Press of San Jose, California, as the second book in its Western Americana series. Written during the height of the Colorado Gold Rush (1859-60), these letters present a vivid picture of life in early-day Denver and the Colorado gold fields. Included in the present edition of 975 copies is a facsimile of the important Buell-Dillingham map of the Colorado gold regions. (\$6.50.)

Also from the same publisher is *Frank Norris: A Bibliography* by Kenneth A. Lohf and Eugene P. Sheehy of Columbia University Libraries. (\$5.75.)

THE CRANBROOK TOWER PRESS in London is issuing in December a bibliography on John Masefield, the Queen's poet laureate. In addition to the list of books and poetry, there will be forty-three plates. The book will celebrate Masefield's eighty-first birthday. (£3 3s.)

THE CULINARY ARTS have been well-served by authors and publishers, and a delectable subject it is. Proof of the pudding may be found in *Gastronomic Bibliography* by Katherine Golden Bitting. This tome of over 700 pages was published privately in 1939 in San Francisco, and was recently given to the Club by Robert Haines.

FROM THE Graphic Arts Research Foundation in Cambridge, Massachusetts, we received a copy of *Le Mariage de Figaro*, published in France, 1957. This is the first European book to be produced on a photographic type composing machine: of special interest to members is its mention at length by Stanley Morison in *Typographic Design In Relation to Photographic Composition*, published recently by the Club. The subject generally is of increasing interest as many of our future tradebooks may be expected to be produced by this process.

CLUB MEMBER and printer Lawton Kennedy was honored with an exhibition and gala opening in the Skyroom of the Gleeson Library, University of San Francisco, on November 8. The show, which will run through December 11, is a "Comprehensive Representation" of Kennedy's printing. On view were ex-

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amples of his letterpress work for John Henry Nash, the Colt Press, the Black Vine Press, and many of the publishers for whom Kennedy filled commissions during his almost half century as a practicing printer. Also shown were the books designed by him—some 50 titles since 1952.

The *Gospel Book of Rabbula*, (586) the oldest illuminated manuscript of the gospels preserved in its entirety, is being published in facsimile by URS Graf-Verlag of Switzerland in an edition limited to 680 numbered copies. There will be 30 color reproductions, illustrations and illuminated pages, plus 80 pages of critical commentaries in English, and color and monochrome illustrations of related manuscripts. The book measures 12 by 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Before publication this fall, the price is \$150; after publication \$175.

THE SIGNET PRESS of Greenock, Scotland, has issued an attractive book, *The First Chidermas*, a play in five scenes by William Kean Seymour. A pleasant Christmas item, the edition is limited to 350 numbered copies: 1–50 hand-bound in Linson vellum boards (21s.); 51–350 in paper covers (7s. 6d.).

A PROPOS the rapidly growing interest in the history of the far west, we have received the first number of *Arizona and the Far West*, a quarterly journal published in Tucson by the University of Arizona, and edited by John Alexander Carroll, Ph.D. This, the spring issue, is impressive in its five feature articles and reviews of seventeen recent books on the west. (The annual rate is \$5.00).

ELIZABETH AND BEN LIEBERMAN, former West Coasters and now proprietors of the Herity Press, 202 Beverly Road, White Plains, New York, have really taken a major enterprise in hand by establishing "The International Register of Private Press Names."

The avowed purpose of this new institution will be "To help existing private presses protect their names against use by others, and to help new presses assure themselves that their proposed names are not already in use—through the maintenance of a permanent, impartial register of record . . .". Press names and marks received before January 1, 1960 will be registered free. An example of the work of the press and two printed examples of the press mark must be returned with each entry. In case of duplication of names or marks, the first received will be given priority.

A COMPREHENSIVE SHOWING of the finest books and ephemera produced by the foremost American book collectors' clubs will be on exhibition at the Lakeside Press Galleries through January. The Book Club of California will be represented in two wall cases and three floor cases while the Roxburghe and Zamo-rano Clubs will each have one wall case and two floor cases. This, along with a floor case for the Rounce and Coffin Club, certainly shows the West Coast has an excellent representation as there are only a total of sixteen wall cases and seventeen floor cases.

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